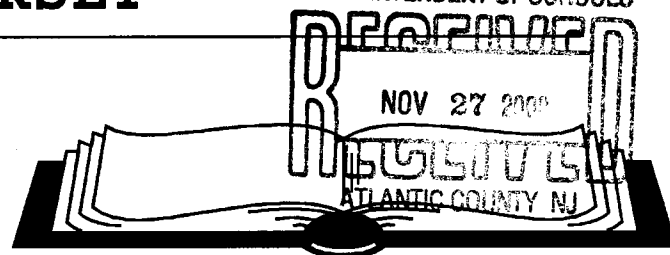


NEW JERSEY

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

2000-2001

Guidelines and
Application

BEST

PRACTICES

**Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 27, 2000**

The Best Practices application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page and page 2, if applicable.

Category Language Arts Literacy (Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name LIT - Literacy in Themes
Number of Schools with Practice 1 (If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	Atlantic		
District (Proper Name)	Buena Regional School District		
Address	P.O. Box 309		
	Street/P. O. Box		
	Buena, New Jersey	08310	
	City		Zip Code
Telephone	856 697-0800	Fax 856 697-4963	Email
Chief School Administrator	Dr. Diane DeGiacomo		
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	Collings Lakes Elementary School		
Address	620 Cains Mill Road		
	Street/P. O. Box		
	Williamstown	08094	Zip Code
Telephone	609 571-4995	Fax 609 561-5646	Email
Principal	Daniel J. Benedetto		
Program Developer(s)	MaryJo Capone, Kathy Gregorio, Valerie Greco, Maryann Preziosi		
Application Prepared By	Daniel J. Benedetto		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature	<i>Diane D. DeGiacomo</i>		

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLYApproved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature*Maureen Key*

**NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION**

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

1. **RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements
2. **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
3. Application must be **keybarded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used.** (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)
4. **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to all the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages.** Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for accuracy and clarity.
5. The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
6. The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
7. The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by **November 27, 2000**, with the **Itemized List of District Applications** form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>LIT- Literacy in Themes</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	<u>K-5</u>	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<u> </u>	Number of Districts with Practice <u> </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School	<u> </u>	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <u> </u>	<u> </u>	

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement	
	(family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards,** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.
6appbp.20

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

Our school's best practice is L.I.T. (Literacy in Themes), which is the incorporation of a school wide theme to ensure the continuity and development of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and to promote individual student self-esteem. This innovative program involves the entire school (kindergarten through fifth grade) in the development and implementation of the various themed activities. Each year a new theme is chosen by our school based team (administrators, teachers and parents). Past themes have included Regions of the World, Watery World, Celebrations, Space, and our current theme, the "Wild West." Our school assemblies, the holiday presentations, the fifth grade play and the kindergarten programs are aligned to the theme.

One objective of our program is to promote reading beyond the "language arts" time frame. Students will develop an appreciation for different genre. The students are encouraged to read both at home and in school and are rewarded for their efforts through various themed related activities. Every school year ends with a culminating literacy activity involving the entire school. Our activity this year will be the "Reading Rodeo."

Another objective of our program is to meet the pupil performance objective for our school, whereas seventy-five percent of the general education students will score above the minimum level of proficiency (MLP) on the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) and the California Achievement Test (CAT /5).

The final program objective is to increase student's self-esteem through the development of literacy skills. Using theme-related stencils, each student's name and his achievement are highlighted and displayed in the corridors of the school. Self-esteem improves as students see their names highlighted in our school's corral that encircles the entire school. Names may appear several times for different accomplishments.

Students who maintain an eighty-five percent grade point average or above in Language Arts are recognized quarterly for their academic achievement; their names are added to the hallway display.

Students are recognized weekly and receive Good Connection Calls from the principal. Every Friday, a student from each room is selected by his/her teacher to receive a phone call to their parent or guardian. Criteria for the selection process includes academic success, good behavior, positive attitude, and effort. A group photo is taken and displayed in the showcase. Their names are added to the corral in the corridor.

2. **List the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the cross-content workplace readiness standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.**

Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards:

Demonstrate self-management skills

The students will realize that they will be awarded tickets for the completion of reading activities. This will motivate them to read more in order to increase their tickets to be used for the “Reading Rodeo.” Students have to allocate their time and tickets to participate in the various activities at the rodeo (funded by the P.T.O.).

Use technology, information and other tools

The fifth grade students will acquire the data from the reading logs and use the Microsoft Excel program to graph the school’s progress.

3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.

The students will explain the story or book depicted on their “book vest.”

Students will speak at the holiday presentations, the fifth grade play, the kindergarten program and the other programs involving student participation.

3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.

During the year the students are actively involved in developing their listening skills by following directions and by participating in the yearlong programs.

3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Each student will write a selection that will be included in the class book. These books are professionally published and presented to our school library at an annual book shelving ceremony.

3.4 All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.

Students will read many sources of literature beyond the language arts frameworks and keep their personal reading logs highlighting their opinion of the book.

Parents and students are invited to come to school for an evening of reading together and completing comprehension activities based on various books.

3.5 All students will view, understand, and use nontextual visual information.

Students will interpret the graphs on display to monitor their individual reading progress.

- 3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.**

The school is located in a rural section of South Jersey in a low socio-economic area. There are few, if any, resources in this portion of the community leaving the funding of special projects to the parent teacher organization (PTO) and /or the school district. The average number of students attending the school balances around 310 children. Approximately sixty percent of the student population is eligible for the school's free and reduced breakfast and lunch program. Due to the unique and diverse needs of the students, the staff utilizes the L.I.T. program to motivate and encourage pride in our students, school, and community.

Our assessments include individual reading logs kept by each student and validated by the parent. Charts for each class depict individual students' reading achievement. Graphs displayed in hallway showcases illustrate individual classroom progress toward the literacy goal. A unique form of assessment is the creation of individual class books, which are professionally bound and published. Each student contributes a written page along with an illustration. These books are purchased by the PTO and are available for all to read in the school library.

Since the development of this program, our school achieved an increase of 44.5% on the ESPA. In May 1999 only 24.4% scored proficient in the Language Arts content area, while in May 2000, 68.9 % were considered proficient.

Parents play an integral part in their child's acquisition of reading skills through their participation in our Family Literacy Nights coordinated by the reading specialist (funded through DEPA and Title I). These nights focus on aiding parents in ways to help their children in reading. They are given strategies and tips on assessing their child's reading comprehension.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

Each year, our L.I.T. program replicates itself by choosing a new theme and by developing activities centered on the literacy and self-esteem goals. We have been doing this program for five years. Although the Core Curriculum Content Standards remain the same, we vary the activities to meet the needs of the students. Our themes rotate every six years.

This practice could be replicated in another school or district by:

- Organizing a core committee consisting of administrators, teachers and parents.
- Selecting a theme.
- Developing and implementing theme-related activities aligned to the Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- Acquiring funds for theme-related assemblies, activities, field trips and rewards from various sources (PTO and local businesses).
- Designating specific dates throughout the school year to promote literacy.
- Creating a culminating activity for the end of the school year that involves the entire student body.

Once the initial program is in place, it is easy to replicate simply by selecting a new theme.